



Mary Magdalene Apostle Catholic Community

- *Making Catholicism relevant*
- *Restoring women's ordination*
- *Living the change we envision*



**Ash Wednesday Service
February 14, 2024**

Presider 1: Jane

Presider 2: Karla

Presider 3: Suzie

Reader 1: Lay minister from GLC

Reader 2: Lay minister from MMACC

Introduction and Welcome

Karla:

Welcome to our joint Ash Wednesday service with Gethsemane Lutheran Church and Mary Magdalene the Apostle Catholic Community where we confront our common humanity and place our faith in the One God who made us all. We honor the Kumeyaay Nation, on whose ancestral lands we have made our home. Today we gather as one, in person and online. Know that wherever you are and whoever you are, you are welcome here, just as you are. We are glad you are joining us. All who want to receive the fullness of Jesus' love are welcome to worship and take Holy Communion.

For those of you participating online, we invite you to join in our songs and communal responses in the worship aid located at mmacc.org and at gethsemanesd.org. It is also posted on the Gethsemane Facebook page. Prayer requests may be offered in the chat of either platform at any time. If you have ashes, you are, of course, invited to use them. If not, receive the blessing of the ashes spiritually. You are also invited to have bread and wine or something similar with you to share in communion.

For those in person, please silence your cell phone before the service begins. All are invited and welcome to receive the wafer, then dip it into the chalice of your choice, either red wine or white grape juice. The wafers are gluten free, but do contain milk and honey. If physical limitations restrict your movement, please let the providers know and we can bring ashes and the elements of communion to you.

Donations may be placed in the basket at the chapel doors or made online at either congregation's website, mmacc.org and at gethsemanesd.org.

We invite you now to take a deep breath and center yourself in the presence of the Holy before we begin with our opening song.

(Strike the Singing Bowl)

Tree of Life and awesome mystery, in your death we are reborn;
though you die in all of hist'ry,
still you rise with every morn, still you rise with every morn.

We remember truth once spoken, love passed on through word and deed;
every person lost and broken
wears Christ's body, in their need, wears Christ's body, in their need.

Christ, you lead and we shall follow, stumbling though our steps may be;
one with you in joy and sorrow,
we the river, you the sea, we the river, you the sea.

Greeting

Presider 1: Blessed be the Holy Trinity, + one God, creator of darkness
and light, word of truth, wind sweeping over the waters. ***Amen.***

Presider 2: The grace of our precious Jesus, the Christ, the love of God, and the
communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. ***And also with you.***

Prayer of the Day

Presider 1: Gracious God,

**All: in love you breathed into dust the breath of life,
 creating us to serve you and our neighbors. Call forth
 our prayers and acts of kindness, and strengthen us to
 face our mortality with confidence in the grace of Jesus
 the Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy
 Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

First Reading —Reader 1

Micah 6:3-8

A Reading from the Prophet Micah

"O My people, what have I done to you?
In what have I wearied you?
Bring your charges!
I brought you out from the land of Egypt
and freed you from a house of slavery.
And I sent Moses, Aaron,

and Miriam to lead you.
Remember now, O My people,
 what the ruler Balak of Moab devised,
 what Balaam from the clan of Beor answered.
Remember what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
 that you may know My liberating acts," says God.

Israel retorts:
"With what shall we come before You, O God,
to show homage in Your Holy Presence?
Shall we enter with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?
Will You, O God, be pleased
 with thousands of rams,
with ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall we give our firstborn children for our transgressions,
the fruits of our bodies for the sins of our souls?"

The Prophet responds:
"God has told you, O people, what is good
and what is required of you:
 to do justice, to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God."

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
Thanks be to God.

Psalm —Reader 2

<i>Ps 78, excerpts, edited, Merrill</i>

The psalm response is: *We turn back to the Beloved.*
R: We turn back to the Beloved.

Listen well, O peoples of Earth,
 to the inner promptings of the Spirit.
Let Silence enter your house that you may hear.
For within your heart Love speaks, not with words of deceit,
 but of spiritual truths to guide you upon the paths of peace.
R: We turn back to the Beloved.

Who will awaken our sleeping minds?
Who will lift up our hearts to the Truth?
Through all generations the rivers have flowed,

but now they are polluted by greed.
Through all the ages Earth has yielded its bountiful harvest;
now valleys, mountains, forests and fields have been misused.
Greed has become the great destroyer of life.
We take without offering back.
We consume Earth's bounty with abandon.
We leave death, disease, and destruction in our greedy wake.
R: We turn back to the Beloved.

We cannot be spared what we have sown.
Generations to come will suffer from our destructive ways.
Their lives will be a mirror to blind and stubborn hearts.
Injustice, oppression and greed will turn back upon hearts of stone.
Children unborn will reap a harvest of lost dreams.
R: We turn back to the Beloved.

Even so, the Source of Life remains faithful,
ever ready to lead us out of the wilderness,
to speak to us in the Silence of our Hearts.
When will we live according to Love,
and attune our hearts to the music of the spheres?
Who will rouse us from apathy
and quicken our spirits that we might serve Love?
For, if we turn back to the Beloved,
listening for Love's voice within our own hearts,
we will live with integrity;
we will radiate love.
R: We turn back to the Beloved.

The Beloved awaits our response to a new dawn
when peoples of Earth will be united in peace,
where harmony will reign forever in the beauty of diversity,
and all people will know the One Who is Love.
R: We turn back to the Beloved.

Second Reading—Reader 2

<i>2 Corinthians 5:20</i>

A Reading from Paul's 2nd Letter to the Corinthians

We are ambassadors for the Messiah, the Christ. God appeals to the world through us.
Therefore, we implore you, on behalf of the Messiah, be reconciled to God.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
Thanks be to God.

Presider: Our God is with you.

And also with you.

Presider: A Reading from the Gospel attributed to Matthew.

Glory to You, O Christ.

A Reading from the Gospel attributed to Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Jesus taught the crowds and the disciples, saying:

"Take care not to perform righteous deeds so that people may see them; otherwise, you'll have no recompense from your Cosmic God. When you give alms, don't blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in places of worship and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they've received their reward. When you give alms, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. Your God, who sees in secret, will bless you. When you pray, don't be like hypocrites who love to stand and pray in their places of worship and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they've received their reward. When you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to God in secret. God, who sees in secret, will bless you....

"When you fast, don't look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance so they appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they've received their reward. When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so you don't appear to be fasting, except to your God who is hidden. Your God, who sees what is hidden, will reward you.

The Gospel of God.

Praise to you Jesus the Christ.

Homily—Suzie Knapp

Hymn

Be Thou My Vision

Be Thou my vision, remain in my heart
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art
Thou my best thought, by day or by night
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light

Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, God
Thou my Beloved, to Thee I belong
Thou in me dwelling and I with Thee one

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise
Thou mine inheritance, now and always
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall
Still be my vision, Creator of all.

[silence for reflection]

Examination of Conscience

Reflection before Examination....

Presider 1—Jane: “This day we acknowledge our oneness with all humanity. Our personal failings merge with the failings of the human race as we ponder the state of our world. Why do we confess to wrongs we have not personally committed? A 16th century mystic, Rabbi Isaac Luria teaches that “the people of (God) may be likened to a body of which every (one) is a living part.” This teaching is prescient. As contemporary people, science has taught us that all life, however different it may seem, comes from the same matter, a matter we might call stardust. That reality corresponds with Rabbi Luria’s teaching: “The vitality of the whole depends upon the health of every organ and limb. That is how deeply we are connected to one another. Therefore, each individual sin inflicts damage on the whole organism and all of us share responsibility for healing the body of (God’s people).”¹

Prayer before Confession:

Presider 2—Karla: Our God, and God of all generations, may our prayers reach Your presence. When we turn to You, do not be indifferent...we know we are arrogant and stubborn, claiming to be blameless and free of sin. In truth, we have stumbled and strayed. We have done wrong.² You know the secrets of the universe and the secrets of the human heart. You know and understand us, for You examine our inner lives. Nothing is concealed from You, nothing hidden from Your sight. Eternal One, our God and God of our ancestors, we pray that this will be the desire of Your heart: forgive all our wrongs; pardon us for every act of injustice; help us atone for all our moral failures, that we might be at-one with one another and with You.³ **Amen.**

¹ Machzor for the Days of Awe, Yom Kippur 1, New York: CCAR 2015/5776, p. 83

² Machzor for the Days of Awe, Yom Kippur 1, p. 82.

³ Machzor for the Days of Awe, Yom Kippur 1, p. 84.

As we begin our collective confession, our response will be antiphonal, with Left and Right sides alternating. The online community is invited to choose to join in the responses with either side.

Failures of Judgment

Presider 1—Jane: Failures of Judgment. For these failures, O God, we ask forgiveness.

**(L) The ways we have wronged you deliberately and by mistake;
(R) and the harm we have caused in Your world through the words of our mouths.**

**(L) The ways we have wronged You by hardening our hearts;
(R) and the harm we have caused in Your world through careless speech.**

**(L) The ways we have wronged you through lies and deceit;
(R) and the harm we have caused in Your world through gossip and rumor.**

**(L) The ways we have wronged You by judging others unfairly;
(R) and the harm we have caused in Your world through disrespect to parents and teachers.**

**(L) The ways we have wronged You through insincere apologies.
(R) and the harm we have caused in Your world by mistreating a friend or neighbor.**

**(L) The ways we have wronged You through violence and abuse;
(R) and the harm we have caused in Your world through dishonesty in business.**

Taizé Chant:

O God hear our prayer, O God hear our prayer, When we call, answer us.

O God hear our prayer, O God hear our prayer, Come and listen to us.

Failures of Thought and Action

Presider 2—Karla: Failures of Thought and Action: For these wrongs, we seek forgiveness:

**(L) The ways we have harmed You openly and secretly;
(R) and harm we have caused in Your world by losing self-control.**

**(L) The ways we have wronged You through sexual immorality;
(R) and harm we have caused in Your world through consumption of food and drink.**

**(L) The ways we have wronged You by giving in to our hostile impulses;
(R) and harm we have caused in Your world through greed and exploitation.**

(L) The ways we have wronged You through cynicism and scorn;

(R) and harm we have caused in Your world through arrogant behavior.⁴

Taizé Chant:

O God hear our prayer, O God hear our prayer, When we call, answer us.

O God hear our prayer, O God hear our prayer, Come and listen to us.

Failures of Integrity

Failures of Integrity: We wrong You when we wrong ourselves. For our failures of integrity, O God, we seek forgiveness:

(L) For passing judgment without knowledge of the facts, and for distorting facts to suit our purposes.

(R) For succumbing in silence to social pressure, and for acquiescing in beliefs we find offensive.

(L) For using others' bad behavior to excuse our own and for blaming others for our mistakes and poor decisions.

(R) For pretending to have emotions we do not feel, and for appearing to be other than what we are.

(L) For condemning in children the faults we tolerate in ourselves;

(R) and for tolerating in ourselves the faults we condemn in others.

Taizé Chant:

O God hear our prayer, O God hear our prayer, When we call, answer us.

O God hear our prayer, O God hear our prayer, Come and listen to us.

Failures of Justice

Failures of Justice: We dishonor You when we dishonor our society. For our failures of justice, O God, we seek forgiveness.

(L) For being indifferent to deprivation and hunger, while accepting a culture of self-indulgence and greed.

(R) For abuse of power in board rooms, court rooms, and classrooms.

(L) For accepting the neglect of children and elders, of the ill and weak.

(R) For permitting social inequities to prevail, and for lacking the vision to transcend our selfishness.

(L) For glorifying violence, turning hastily to war, and for allowing history to repeat itself.

⁴ Machzor for the Days of Awe, Yom Kippur 1, p. 88.

(R) For behaviors that risk the future of our planet, and for wreaking havoc on our only true inheritance – God’s creation.⁵

Presider:

For all these wrongs, collective and individual, we ask Your forgiveness, O God.

Taizé Chant:

O God hear our prayer, O God hear our prayer, When we call, answer us.

O God hear our prayer, O God hear our prayer, Come and listen to us.

For Acts of Healing and Repair

For Acts of Healing and Repair: We recognize the healing we have done individually or anonymously and the acts of repair we have done without personal gain:

(L) by seeking forgiveness and by forgiving others;

(R) through righteous giving and by opening our hearts;

(L) by comforting the mourner and visiting the sick;

(R) by pursuing justice, human rights, fairness and civility;

(L) by making peace between one person and another;

(R) by protecting nature and all its creatures;

(L) by teaching our children the ways of peace...

(R) by honoring elders and loving the stranger;

(L) by choosing life and blessing,

(R) by choosing to live and be a blessing.

All: And all these bring nearer the day when we shall be one and Your Name shall be One.⁶

Our God and God of our (ancestors), do not abandon us, leaving us in shame. Show us Your ways. (T)each us how to live. Let us be open to Your love, ready to revere Your very being. Cut away the hardness of our hearts, so that we may turn to You with all our heart’s devotion and truly be repentant. For the sake of Your great name, pardon our failures and forgive our moral weakness...forgive our wrongs, no matter how great.⁷

Blessing and Distribution of Ashes

⁵ Machzor for the Days of Awe, Yom Kippur 1, p. 89.

⁶ Id., p. 93.

⁷ Id., p. 104

Blessing

God of all Life and Creation, on this Ash Wednesday You invite us to remember and wonder at the gift of life and our connectedness with all creation. May these ashes remind us of the mystery of life, death and new life. May they nourish our hearts. During the Lenten Season bring forth in us the fruits of Your Spirit, a harvest of justice, peace and generosity.

All: God of Life, we ask for Your blessing upon these ashes. May they become for us a symbol of our passing through death to life, a proclamation, not of our piety but of your grace. Bless us and ground us in Your everlasting love, as a faith community both forgiven and forgiving, healed and healing. Amen.

Distribution

At this time, you are invited to come forward, to one of two stations. Receive the sign of the cross on your forehead made with these ashes. Receiving ashes is a sign of our commitment to make Lent a time of Holiness and thanksgiving, a time of spiritual renewal in our relationships with ourselves, God, all people, and our planet. As ashes are placed on your forehead, you will hear a blessing spoken over you. Please respond with "Amen."

"Beloved, You have come from Stardust and to Stardust you shall return. You are loved. Nothing can separate you from God's love."

(Instrumental Music played during distribution, after the distribution, we will return to the chant.)

***O God hear our prayer, O God hear our prayer, When we call, answer us.
O God hear our prayer, O God hear our prayer, Come and listen to us. (3x)***

Holy Communion

Blessed are you, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread and wine to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. They will become for us the bread of life and spiritual drink.

Blessed be God forever.

Pray that our offering is one that God desires.

We are gathered in Your name. Be with us in our midst.

Reader 1

Blessed and holy are You, God of creation. At your word, all creation came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, stars, the planets in their courses and this fragile

earth, our island home. From the primal elements, You brought forth human beings and blessed us to participate in Your ongoing web of life.

Reader 2

In Jesus, we learned how to serve others, even strangers and our enemies. Jesus lived in service of the common good and collective well-being. He sought out those in need of community. He befriended the ones who were isolated. He challenged the structures that divide and separate us.

Presider

The Spirit that worked through Jesus works in us. The Spirit of courage that kept Jesus proclaiming love even in the face of death can live in us.

Please feel free to extend your hand, palm up, toward the bread and wine.

Presider

Pour out your Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine.

Presider

May they be for us the Body of Christ, that we might become the body of Christ in the world. Please join me as we remember Jesus with his followers...

All:

On the night of his betrayal, Jesus shared a meal with his friends.

He took bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it to his disciples, saying:

"This is my body. Do this in memory of me."

[Pause]

In the same way, Jesus took the cup filled with wine. He gave it to his friends to drink, blessing it and them, thanking God and saying:

"Take this all of you and drink. This is my life-blood; the cup of Love.

Do this in memory of me."

Presider: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

***We proclaim your death, O Christ, and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.***

Reader 1

As we feast at your table, fill our hearts with courage to follow Jesus, to live as he lived. May we experience anew Your call to forgiveness, transformation, and new life.

Reader 2

Be with all who have died and gone before us into the fullness of cosmic life with You.
Gather together people of every gender, race, language, religion and way of life to share in
Your one unending banquet.

Presider: In Your presence, we give You glory with all creation and with Jesus through
whom Your goodness flows.

***Through Christ, With Christ, In Christ,
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,
may all glory and honor be Yours, forever and ever:***

The Great Amen

A-men, a-men, a-men. A-men, a-men, a-men.

Prayer of Jesus

Please join in the prayer of Jesus in the words most comforting to you. Two options are
provided in your bulletin.

**Loving God, in whom is heaven.
May Your Name be honored everywhere.
May Your kin-dom come,
May the desire of Your heart for
the world be done,
In us, by us and through us.
Give us the bread we need for each day.
Forgive us. Enable us to forgive others.
Keep us from all anxiety and fear.
For You reign in the power
that comes from love
which is Your glory,
forever and ever.
Amen.**

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours, now and forever.
Amen.**

Presider: This is God's holy bread and wine for the transformation of God's holy people.
All: We are blessed to share in this sacred meal.

Presider: Whenever and wherever we gather, online or in person, on Sunday or during the
week, we are the church and God is with us. May all who share in this communion be
united in the Body of Christ that knows no bounds. Amen. We'll gather in a semi-circle
around the altar. We'll put the wafer into your hand. Please dip the wafer into the cup of
your choice, red wine or white grape juice. Please stay at the altar to pray until all in your
group have been served.

Please come. These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

Communion Song – Let us Break Bread Together *African-American Spiritual*

Let us break bread together on our knees;
let us break bread together on our knees;
when I fall down on my knees
with my face to the rising sun,
O God, have mercy on me.

Let us drink wine together on our knees;
let us drink wine together on our knees;
when I fall down on my knees
with my face to the rising sun,
O God, have mercy on me.

Let us praise God together on our knees;
let us praise God together on our knees;
when I fall down on my knees
with my face to the rising sun,
O God, have mercy on me.

Communion Song - Shepherd Us, O God *M Haugen*

Refrain:

***Shepherd us, O God, beyond our wants,
beyond our fears, from death into life.***

God is our shepherd, so nothing shall we want,
We rest in the meadows of faithfulness and love,
We walk by the quiet waters of peace. *Refrain*

Gently you raise us and heal our weary souls,
You lead us by pathways of righteousness and truth,
Our spirits shall sing the music of your name. *Refrain*

Though we should wander the va-lley of death,
We fear no evil, for you are in our midst,
Your rod and your staff, our comfort and our hope. *Refrain*

You have set us a banquet of love in the face of hatred,
crowning us with love beyond our pow'r to hold. *Refrain*

Surely your kindness and mercy follow us all the days of our lives;
We will dwell in the house of our God forevermore.

***Shepherd us, O God, beyond our wants,
beyond our fears, from death into life.***

Closing Rites

Post Communion Blessing (after each table)

Presider

Now having received this precious gift of the very life of Jesus the Christ, receive it, and live, from this day onward to the life everlasting. Amen.

Closing Blessing

Presider: May we gain wisdom in our lives overflowing like a river with understanding, each of us loved for the peace we bring to others.

May our deeds exceed our speech.

May we conquer all fear and doubt and despair.

Rise up like the sun, O God, over all humanity. May Your radiance...go forth over all the earth...enflame the universe with the joy of wholeness, of freedom and of peace. ⁸

Closing Song – Teach us How to Pray Aright

Christ, teach us how to pray aright,
With rev'rence and respect
Though dust and ashes in your sight,
We may, we must draw near.

We perish if we cease from prayer;
Oh, grant us pow'r to pray.
And when to meet you we prepare,
Christ, meet us on our way.

Give deep humility; the sense
Of godly sorrow give;
A strong, desire, with confidence,
To hear your voice and live;

⁸ Ibid.

Sending Forth

We are at the threshold of Lent. Go in peace. Remember the poor.

Thanks be to God.

We are grateful that you have joined us for worship today.

Presiders: Rev Karla Seyb-Stockton, pastor, GLC

Bishop Jane Via, pastor, MMACC

Preacher: Rev Suzie Knapp, pastor, MMACC

Pianist: Malcolm Twentyman

Cantor: Ken Baker

Ministers of the Good News: Everyone

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Lectionary by Nancy Corran and Jane Via,

<https://www.inclusivelectionary.org/>